

BEN MALINGA JOHN

University of Malawi

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Ben Malinga John is a demographer and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Population Studies at the University of Malawi. He leads the University of Malawi–Max Planck Partner Group, advancing demographic research and data infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa. His research focuses on family demography, fertility, and demographic methods, with particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. He developed the Indirect Life Table of First Union Dissolution (ILTUD), a method for estimating union dissolution patterns from incomplete marriage histories. Dr John is also currently establishing the Malawi University Graduate Internet Panel (MUGIP), a longitudinal study of family formation and the transition to adulthood among university-educated young adults. His work has appeared in leading journals, including *Demography*, *Population Studies*, *Population and Development Review*, and *Population Research and Policy Review*. He serves on the editorial board of *Population Research and Policy Review* and was a member of the IUSSP Panel on COVID-19, Fertility, and the Family (2022–2025). He received the 2022 Jan M. Hoem Best Paper Award for a Junior Research Scientist.

EDUCATION

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| 9/2020 – 5/2024 | PhD. Sociological Demography. Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Germany & Stockholm University, Sweden.

<i>Thesis: Union-Fertility Nexus and Fertility Variation in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Marital Dissolution and Repartnering</i>

Supervisors: Associate Professor. Natalie Nitsche; Prof. Gunnar Andersson; Prof. Elizabeth Thomson; Prof. Mikko Myrskylä |
| 2/2016 – 9/2017 | MPhil (Distinction in Research). Demography. University of Cape Town, South Africa. |
| 2/2008 – 9/2012 | BSc (Distinction). Statistics and Demography. University of Malawi. Malawi |
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EMPLOYMENT

4/2026 – Present	Senior Lecturer. Department of Sociology and Population Studies. University of Malawi. Zomba, Malawi
1/2019 – 3/2026 (Paused 9/2020 – 8/2024 for PhD)	Lecturer. Department of Sociology and Population Studies. University of Malawi. Zomba, Malawi.
5/2024 – 8/2024	Research Scientist. Department of Social Demography. Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. Rostock, Germany.
9/2020 – 4/2024	PhD Student. Department of Social Demography. Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. Rostock, Germany.
10/2017 – 12/2018	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist. Community Health Programs. VillageReach, Lilongwe, Malawi.
12/2012 – 12/2015	Monitoring, Evaluation & Research Coordinator. Evidence for Action Project. Parent and Child Health Initiative, Lilongwe, Malawi.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & SCHOLARSHIPS

9/2025 – 8/2030	Max Planck Partner Group Award (Principal Applicant)	€100,000.00
<i>The Max Planck Partner Group Award is a prestigious and highly competitive program that supports the establishment of an independent research group in the recipient's home country. It is granted to outstanding researchers returning from a research residence at a Max Planck Institute, with the aim of fostering sustainable scientific collaboration and capacity building.</i>		
7/2025 – 8/2025	Global South Visiting Fellow Grant. Australian National University (Principal Applicant)	€8,537.75
<i>Australian National University (ANU) Global South Visiting Fellow Grant is a competitive fellowship supporting researchers from the Global South to engage in collaborative research, capacity building, and academic exchange at ANU. The grant aims to foster sustainable partnerships and strengthen global research networks.</i>		
2/2016 – 12/2017	Hewlett Foundation Scholarship for MPhil. University of Cape Town (Principal Applicant)	€7,522.13
6/2018	SICSS Grant. Summer Institute in Computational Social Sciences. University of Cape Town	NA

RESEARCH LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATIONS

- **Head, Max Planck Partner Group, University of Malawi:** Leading an innovative initiative to enhance demographic data infrastructure in Malawi by advancing use of underutilized administrative data for timely and improved demographic and health research.
 - **Methodological Innovator:** Developed the Indirect Life Table of First Union Dissolution (ILTUD) method to analyse incomplete data, expanding research capacity in low- and middle-income countries.
 - **International Research Collaborations:** Partnering with researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, University of Malawi, Australian National University, University of Montreal, University of Wisconsin–Madison, and University of Colorado Boulder.
 - **Editorial Board Member, Population Research and Policy Review:** Providing scientific leadership by shaping research quality and editorial direction in a leading population studies journal.
 - **Expert Peer Reviewer:** Regularly reviewing for top journals, including *Demography*, *Population and Development Review*, and *European Journal of Population*, ensuring high standards in demographic research.
 - **Member, IUSSP Panel on COVID-19, Fertility, and the Family:** Represented Africa in setting international research agendas on pandemic impacts and family demography.
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TEACHING & ADVISING

1/2019 – Present

Teaching

(University of Malawi)

- DEM213: Statistics for Demographers– Bachelor’s Level
- DEM412: Indirect Estimation of Demographic Measure – Bachelor’s Level
- DEM102: Introduction to Demographic Techniques Bachelor’s Level
- DEM320: Demographic Research Methods – Bachelor’s Level
- PGSBP 510: Advanced Quantitative Research Methods– Postgraduate Level

Advising

- Supervised 18 Bachelor’s students and 3 Master’s students on research projects

Course Development

- Organizer and facilitator of a short course on Data Visualization Using R

2027 • Postgraduate Tutor. Biostatistics for Demographers

(University of
Cape Town)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

7/2014 – Present	Editorial Board Member. Population Research and Policy Review
6/2022 – 12/2025	Committee Member (Africa). International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) Panel on COVID-19, Fertility, and the Family
7/2025	Session Chair. Union Dissolution Across Life Stages. 30 th IUSSP Conference. Brisbane, Australia
2021– Present	Peer reviewer. Demography, Population and Development Review, Studies in Family Planning, Demographic Research, Population Research and Policy Review, Advances in Life Course Research, European Journal of Population, Genus, Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences

RECOGNITIONS

2022	MPIDR Jan M. Hoem Best Paper Award by a Junior Research Scientist (for the paper "Fertility decline in sub-Saharan Africa: Does remarriage matter?" Population Studies 76(2): 213–233).
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The Jan M. Hoem Paper Award was established in 2020 to reward a junior researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) for a paper that exhibits the quality, innovation, originality, and scientific merit exemplified by the work of Jan M. Hoem. This was the first time a PhD student won this award.

2010	Faculty of Science Outstanding Student of the Year. University of Malawi
2010	Faculty of Science Outstanding Student of the Year. University of Malawi

PUBLICATIONS

Published/ Forthcoming

John, Ben Malinga, and Sara Yeatman. 2026. *Marital Dissolution, Repartnering, and the Realization of Fertility Desires in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Population and Development Review. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.70085>

Abdel Ghany, Jasmin, Aasli A. Nur, Kerry LD MacQuarrie, Joshua Wilde, Elizabeth A. Sully, Mahesh Karra, Ursula Gazeley, **Ben Malinga John**, and Livia Montana. "In the wake of USAID cuts, we can create a Demographic and Health Survey Program founded on more equitable data infrastructure and stronger research integrity." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 123, no. 9 (2026): e2513242123.

John, Ben Malinga, and Natalie Nitsche. 2025. *Prevalence and Drivers of Stalls and Reversals in Age at First Marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Population Research and Policy Review. 44(3), 26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-024-09932-0>

John, Ben Malinga. 2024. *Union-Fertility Nexus and Fertility Variation in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Marital Dissolution and Repartnering*. Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Stockholm University. <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-226359>

John, Ben Malinga, and Natalie Nitsche. 2023. "Indirect Estimation of the Timing of First Union Dissolution with Incomplete Marriage Histories." Demography 60 (2): 411–430. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-10581068>

John, Ben Malinga, and Natalie Nitsche. 2022. "Dynamics of Union Dissolution in Sub-Saharan Africa." Population and Development Review 48(4): 913-1222. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/padr.12529>

John, Ben Malinga, and Vissého Adjwanou. 2022. "Fertility Decline in Sub-Saharan Africa: Does Remarriage Matter?" Population Studies 76(2): 213-233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12529>

Adjwanou, Vissého, and **Ben Malinga John**. 2022. "The Demography of Fertility." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.013.185>

Njolomole, Stephen E., Ridhaa Fatima Sachidanandan, George Mandere, Alisa Jenny, Adamson S. Muula, Bridon M'baya, **Ben Malinga John**, et al. 2022. "Meeting demand—Obstetric haemorrhage and blood availability in Malawi, a qualitative study." PLoS One 17(8). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0273426>

John, Ben Malinga. 2018. *On Marriage Dynamics and Fertility in Malawi: How Does Remarriage Affect Fertility Preferences and Childbearing Behaviour?* MPhil thesis, University of Cape Town. <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/28350>

Ben Malinga John, Emmanuel Souza, and Jiaxin Shi (R&R). *From laggard to leader: Malawi's life expectancy transformation in sub-Saharan African context, 1950–2023*. Demographic Research

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Pohl, Maria & **Ben Malinga John**. *Dynamics of child-parent co-residence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. European Association for Population Studies, Bologna, Italy, 3-6 June 2026.

Ben Malinga John and Sara Yeatman. *Marital Dissolution, Repartnering, and the Realization of Fertility Desires in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 30th International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Conference, Brisbane, Australia, July 2025.

Precious Thete, Ustus Mutoera & **Ben Malinga John**. *Phases of Demographic Transition and Shifting Reproductive Behaviours in Malawi*. 2025 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, Zomba, Malawi, August 2025.

Ithembi Kunkumbira, Everisto Mwenda & **Ben Malinga John**. *Perspectives on Modes of Marital Dissolution and Children's Access to Parental and Kin Social Support*. 2025 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, Zomba, Malawi, August 2025.

Ernestina Chiona, Elizabeth Nakweya, Blessings Tambulasi & **Ben Malinga John**. *Unpacking Structural Gender Inequalities in Scientific Knowledge Production: Evidence from the University of Malawi*. 2025 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, Zomba, Malawi, August 2025.

Ben Malinga John, Emmanuel Souza & Jiaxin Shi. *From Laggard to Leader: Malawi's Life Expectancy Gains in a Sub-Saharan African Context*. 2025 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, Zomba, Malawi, August 2025.

Sylvia David Kachola, Gowokani Chijere Chirwa, **Ben Malinga John** & Susie Lee. *Lifetime Marital Status, Educational Attainment, and the Timing of Premature and Early Menopause in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 2025 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Conference, Zomba, Malawi, August 2025.

Ben Malinga John. *The Contribution of Marital Dissolution and Repartnering to Fertility Variation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Macro-level Perspective*. 9th African Population Conference, Lilongwe, Malawi, May 2024.

Ben Malinga John. *The Contribution of Marital Dissolution and Repartnering to Fertility Variation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Macro-level Perspective*. Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA), Columbus, Ohio, April 2024.

Ben Malinga John. *Marriage Dynamics and Population Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Are Women Growing Old Alone?* Workshop on Ageing and Health of Older Persons in Sub-Saharan Africa, Entebbe, Uganda, February 2023.

Ben Malinga John, Vissého Adjiwanou and Natalie Nitsche. *Re-partnering and Fertility in the Global South: Regularities and Distinctions*. Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA), New Orleans, April 2023.

Ben Malinga John and Natalie Nitsche. *Linkages Between Education Expansion and Stalls and Reversals in Age at First Marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Study of Birth Cohorts 1940-1999*. RC28 Conference, Paris, France, August 2023.

Ben Malinga John and Natalie Nitsche. *New Perspectives on Divorce in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Cohort Analysis of Women Born Between 1955-2000*. Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA), Online, May 2021.

Ben Malinga John and Vissého Adjiwanou. *On Marriage Dynamics and Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from Malawi*. 8th African Population Conference, Entebbe, Uganda, November 2019.